

KNOX AWARD

2008 Award Winner: B/2-11 FAR

BBattery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment (B/2-11 FAR), is the winner of the 2008 Henry A. Knox Best Active Component Battery Award. B/2-11 FAR's commander is Captain Zachary A. Reed with NCO leader First Sergeant Ramon Malave.

The annual award is named for the first Chief of Field Artillery, Major General Henry A. Knox, a Revolutionary War hero, and recognizes an outstanding Active Army battery based on specific criteria and a narrative of performance. A similar award was established in 1924 but was phased out in 1940 as World War II loomed. The award was reestablished in 2002. (For more information, see the "Knox, Hamilton and Gruber Awards" link at <http://sill-www.army.mil/awards/default.htm>.)

The B Battery *Bulldogs* dominated their mission sets while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 07-09. They executed diverse missions, including the traditional mission of providing indirect fires and nontraditional missions, such as a ground maneuver element and a base defense element. Flawlessly executing so many mission sets within a 15-month deployment is proof of the *Bulldogs'* professionalism and dedication.

Deployed. On Christmas Eve 2007, B Battery arrived in country at Contingency Operating Base (COB) Taji, Iraq. After completing relief in place/transfer of authority, 1st Platoon (1/B/2-11 FA) was task organized as a maneuver platoon and given responsibility for Joint Security Station Taji and three nearby towns. 1st Platoon was responsible for security and improving the quality of life of the Iraqi people who resided in its operational environment (OE).

2nd Platoon assumed control of Firebase Mayhem. It was here, at 0823 on 2 January 2008, that the *Bulldogs* became the first unit to fire the newly fielded lightweight 155-mm M777A2 howitzer in combat. B Battery would end its tenure on the gun line having fired more than 600 rounds in support of combat operations in the MultiNational Division, Baghdad (MND-B) OE.

Additional Mission Sets. In April 2008, 2nd Platoon received orders to



B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment (B/2-11 FAR) (Photo courtesy of B/2-11 FAR)

transition from the gun line to a security force to escort the embedded provincial reconstruction team (ePRT) charged with developing the governance and infrastructure throughout 2-25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team's (SBCT's) OE. 2nd Platoon fielded six new Cougar II Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles and attended numerous personal security detachment training events in preparation for the new mission. The 2/B/2-11 FA Soldiers conducted more than 200 missions throughout the MND-B OE, seeing more areas of Iraq than any other platoon in 2-25 SBCT.

In May 2008, B Battery assumed the additional mission sets of the brigade tactical reserve and the division rapid reaction force. To meet the demands of these new tasks, B Battery had 1/C/1-27 IN and a section from 556th Signal Company assigned to its ranks. This Infantry platoon, Signal section and B Battery's headquarters element formed the brigade's action arm known as "Task Force (TF) Spear."

This platoon (plus) was responsible for conducting signal intelligence-based targeting of enemy high-value individuals (HVI) within and outside the brigade's OE. Using air assault- or Stryker-based ground-assault capabilities, TF Spear successfully captured many division, brigade, battalion and TF targets, including the brigade's number one HVI.

In October 2008, B Battery received orders to transition to operate and defend

the main entry control point (ECP) for COB Taji, as well as the base defense liaison team mission. 1st Platoon returned from its mission in sector and assumed duties at the ECP; 2nd Platoon transitioned from the ePRT security force and assumed the duties of the base defense liaison team.

To operate the main ECP known as "Gunner's Gate," B Battery received operational control of a Macedonian platoon and private security contractors from Uganda. As the base defense liaison team, 2nd Platoon patrolled on and off base for any possible threats to more than 20,000 Coalition personnel and contractors residing on COB Taji.

B Battery displayed the professionalism, dedication and flexibility necessary to execute numerous diverse missions in support of operations in MND-B. The *Bulldogs* led the way for the Army as the first unit to fire the M777A2 in combat, and their lethal and nonlethal maneuver operations notably were successful.

The *Bulldogs* are proven Warriors with the physical and mental dexterity to accomplish the mission with exemplary distinction. Through rigorous training, complimented with personal and professional development, every member of B/2-11 FAR contributes to a collective that is unmatched on the modern battlefield. B Battery quickly made a name for itself as an adaptable unit dedicated to completing the mission successfully—each and every time.